

## Colonnade Program Course Proposal: Connections Category

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### ***Connections: Understanding Individual and Social Responsibility***

*Connections* courses direct students to apply and integrate discipline-specific knowledge and skills to the significant issues challenging our individual and shared responsibility as global citizens. Students will learn to analyze and evaluate cultural contexts, examine issues on both a local and global scale, and apply system-level approaches to the stewardship of our social and physical environments. Although they may be used with a major or minor program, *Connections* courses are classes at the 200-level or above designed for the general student population, and may be taken *only after* students have earned at least 21 hours in **WKU Colonnade Program** coursework or have achieved junior status. *Connections* courses may not have graduate components or prerequisites other than approved courses within the **WKU Colonnade Program**.

Proposed courses must be designed to address specifically the goals and outcomes of one (1) of the subcategories listed below. Students will take one course from each of the three following areas, selecting three different disciplines (usually defined by course prefixes).

- **Social and Cultural** (3 hours)  
Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.
  1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
  2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
  3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.
  
- **Local to Global** (3 hours)  
Students will examine local and global issues within the context of an increasingly interconnected world. Courses will consider the origins and dynamics of a global society, the significance of local phenomena on a global scale, and/or material, cultural, and ethical challenges in today's world.
  1. Analyze issues on local and global scales.
  2. Examine the local and global interrelationships of one or more issues.
  3. Evaluate the consequences of decision-making on local and global scales.

- **Systems** (3 hours)

Students will examine systems, whether natural or human, by breaking them down into their component parts or processes and seeing how these parts interact. Courses will consider the evolution and dynamics of a particular system or systems and the application of system-level thinking.

1. Analyze how systems evolve.
2. Compare the study of individual components to the analysis of entire systems.
3. Evaluate how system-level thinking informs decision-making, public policy, and/or the sustainability of the system itself.

\*\*\*NOTE: The **Colonnade Program** is designed to incrementally build student skills in argumentation and the use of evidence beginning with discipline-specific coursework in the *Foundations* and *Explorations* categories. By extension, *Connections* courses are intended to be summative learning experiences in which students apply basic knowledge to larger and more complex social, global and systemic issues of concern. Proposals should address this summative purpose in the design of the course and the assessment of student learning.

Please complete the following and return electronically to [colonnadeplan@wku.edu](mailto:colonnadeplan@wku.edu).

1. What course does the department plan to offer in *Connections*? Which subcategory are you proposing for this course? (Social and Cultural, Local to Global, Systems)  
Social Psychology, PSYS 350. This course fits into the Social and Cultural Category.
2. How will this course meet the specific learning objectives of the appropriate subcategory? Please address **all** of the learning outcomes listed for the appropriate subcategory.

Learning Objective	How Social Psychology meets this:
<p>Students will investigate ways in which individuals shape, and are shaped by, the societies and cultures within which they live. Courses will consider the ethical questions and shared cultural values that shape societal norms and behaviors, the independent and collective or collaborative artistic expression of those values, and/or the role of social and cultural institutions in developing and sustaining norms, values, and beliefs.</p>	<p>These objectives are some of the same objectives that scientific social psychology has. For instance, students will learn about persuasion and prejudice reduction (individuals shaping society), compliance, obedience, and the impact of culture on the self (individuals shaped by society and culture), and how these processes are controlled by social situations that individuals experience and create. Regarding ethics and norms, social psychology examines how ethical behavior generally is a function of situational factors, other than will-power, and directly addresses norms in covering such topics as compliance and relationships. Resistance to social influence also features as a module component in the course.</p>
<p>1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.</p>	<p>As one example of how this course addresses this goal, students will learn how the self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy all exist in transactional relationship with their social environment. They will learn that who we think we are often is more a function of the roles we fill and the expectations others have for us than of who we actually may be. Some of the other ways that social psychology addresses this particular goal occur while covering topics of social influence, prejudice and discrimination, relationships, and aggression.</p>
<p>2. Examine diverse values that form</p>	<p>Students will learn better how to</p>

<p>civically engaged and informed members of society.</p>	<p>understand others’ personal, social, and cultural perspectives. They will learn, for instance, the conditions under which intergroup negotiations are most likely to lead to conflict. They also will learn how different conceptualizations of the self, and how differential activation of diverse goals, impact people’s interpreted reality. Social psychology goes beyond the seeming differences between people to understand some of the common processes that make us human. By understanding these, differences in values and culture become less threatening. Educated and engaged citizens rely on the best representation of social reality available in order to manage and mold this reality to our benefit. Social psychology provides an empirically-based model of how the social world really works. It strips away value judgments to focus on what it is, essentially, that creates our social existence. Social psychology thus provides a highly critical examination of how values drive civic behavior. The end effect of this course is that it equips students to operate in a world of diverse (but psychologically predictable) values that otherwise might have been seen as morally questionable.</p>
<p>3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.</p>	<p>Social psychology has a tradition of social problem solving, ranging from addressing intergroup conflict to increasing medical treatment compliance. Students will learn such things as how soap operas can be used to increase condom usage, the conditions under which intergroup contact most effectively facilitates good relationships, how values such as materialism are damaging to mental health, how the use of weapons such as Predator drones increases the willingness of the operator to kill, but may increase his or her post killing discomfort, when alcohol consumption causes aggression (vs. helpfulness), why riots occur, and</p>

	<p>much more. For all of these topics, the understandings gained lend much clarity for how to best solve these problems. After taking this course, students evaluate solutions first based on their knowledge of empirically supported psychological principles, and secondly, based on the expectation that outcomes must be measured and evaluated in order to render judgment.</p>
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3. In addition to meeting the posted learning outcomes, how does this course contribute uniquely to the *Connections* category (i.e., why should this course be in Colonnade)? Discuss in detail.

Social psychology combines an appreciation of the complexity of social life with the demand that simplifying assumptions about this complexity be empirically tested. These empirical tests overwhelmingly show that diverse, superficially-different behaviors can be decomposed and understood using basic psychological principles. This course is an extended exercise in the application of these principles to the individual and cultural vagaries of our human experience.

There are few other disciplines that so aggressively apply the scientific method to discover and explain the basic psychological phenomena that make up our common humanity. Students in social psychology are given the means and practice to make sense of their world in a way supported by facts, not supposition or superstition. Social psychology is a course that most students report being very helpful to them in understanding the world.

To put this into the language of the connections course requirements, in order to pass this course, students must apply and integrate their discipline-specific knowledge to address both the daily challenges we all face and to start to gain a better understanding of the larger issues in our world: prejudice; what is love; is there such a thing as altruism; why don't we all get along? These are all topics that this course addresses.

4. Please identify any prerequisites for this course. NOTE: Any prerequisites MUST be *Colonnade Foundations* or *Explorations* courses.

PSYS 100

5. Syllabus statement of learning outcomes for the course. NOTE: In multi-section courses, the same statement of learning outcomes must appear on every section's syllabus.

This course is an introduction to social psychology. This course provides familiarity with the major areas of study within Social Psychology, and the central questions or issues in each of these areas.

It is also a Connections course under the Colonnade Plan. It is designed to meet and exceed the requirements for learning objectives under the Colonnade Plan. In this course, we will:

1. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
2. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
3. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

More concretely, we will gain abilities to understand how the situations we are in cause us to think and act. Instead of seeing behavior as caused solely by a person's personality, we will learn how the situation works in combination with personality to make people do the things that they do.

We also will practice using our new knowledge of social psychology to critically interpret and offer new perspectives on the world around us.

These new abilities will allow us new insight into the nature of our lives, and allow us a more accurate understanding of within and cross-cultural differences in behavior. Understanding the psychological principles at work behind behavior makes it obvious that we as humans share far more similarities than differences. It also helps to clarify how we can work with others, all over the world, to achieve the basic goals and needs that all people have.

One important goal of this course is to provide the opportunity to become better critical thinkers capable of uncommon insight into human behavior.

6. Give a brief description of how the department will assess the course beyond student grades for these learning objectives.

Student grades reference the individual student's achievement on course assignments. The performance of the class as a whole on the course assignments gives information about learning objective achievement. For instance, quizzes tap into the topics above that are congruent with learning objectives for the course. As such, the quizzes will be part of the assessment of learning objectives.

In this course, students provide written responses to reading assignments. The readings are chosen to reflect issues of scientific and social interest. On reading response writing assignments, students are evaluated according to how well they understand the readings and their identification and description of the author's assumption(s) (learning objective 2). They also, among other parts of the reading response assignments, describe the implications of the reading for both themselves and others (learning objectives 1 and 3). As such, writing responses to these readings in general reflect the goals of learning objective 3.

In order to assess the learning objectives for the course, all students enrolled in Social Psychology (PSYS 350) will complete a standardized assessment including 10 items. These items will be constructed such that multiple items will represent each learning objective. The assessment items will be drawn from the course material (as outlined in the course learning outcomes) that is covered during lecture and in the course readings, discussion, and activities. We will randomly sample 50 students who are enrolled in PSYS 350 per calendar year to examine student performance on the 10 items. The following criteria will be used to assess the students' mastery of the learning objectives in the course.

- Excellent = at least 70% of the students answered 9 out of the 10 assessment items correctly
  - Good = at least 70% of the students answered 7 out of the 10 assessment items correctly
  - Satisfactory = at least 50% of the students answered 7 out of the 10 assessment items correctly
  - Unsatisfactory = under 50% of students answered 7 of 10 assessment items correctly.
7. Please discuss how this course will provide a summative learning experience for students in the development of skills in argumentation and use of evidence.

Learning about research is in many ways learning about the validity of different kinds of evidence. The new research content that students learn about will build on their existing understanding to encourage a more sophisticated interaction with their worlds. Students will hone their argumentation skills in particular by completing a series of reading response assignments, each focused on a different reading, and answering persuasively a number of questions designed to spur critical thinking and address learning objectives. Repeated practice over the course of the semester provides for nearly inevitable improvement and growth (summative learning).

8. How many sections of this course will your department offer each semester?

At least 1 large (60-70 students) section.

9. Please attach sample syllabus for the course. **PLEASE BE SURE THE PROPOSAL FORM AND THE SYLLABUS ARE IN THE SAME DOCUMENT.**

Syllabus begins on next page.

**Syllabus**  
**Introduction to Social Psychology – PSYS 350**

**Please expect changes to this syllabus. These changes will be announced in class.**

Instructor: Aaron Wichman, Ph.D      Office: GRH 3013      Office hours: Mon/Wed 8:30-  
Email: wichmana@gmail.com      Phone: 745-2443      11:20 & by appointment

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(Please include “PSYS 350” in the subject line of all emails to me to help me respond to you more quickly.)

Course Objectives

This course is an introduction to social psychology. This course provides familiarity with the major areas of study within Social Psychology, and the central questions or issues in each of these areas.

It is also a Connections course under the Colonnade Plan. It is designed to meet and exceed the requirements for learning objectives under the Colonnade Plan. In this course, we will:

4. Analyze the development of self in relation to others and society.
5. Examine diverse values that form civically engaged and informed members of society.
6. Evaluate solutions to real-world social and cultural problems.

More concretely, we will gain abilities to understand how the situations we are in cause us to think and act. Instead of seeing behavior as caused solely by a person’s personality, we will learn how the situation works in combination with personality to make people do the things that they do.

We also will practice using our new knowledge of social psychology to critically interpret and offer new perspectives on the world around us.

These new abilities will allow us new insight into the nature of our lives, and allow us a more accurate understanding of within and cross-cultural differences in behavior. Understanding the psychological principles at work behind behavior makes it obvious that we as humans share far more similarities than differences. It also helps to clarify how we can work with others, all over the world, to achieve the basic goals and needs that all people have.

One important goal of this course is to provide the opportunity to become better critical thinkers capable of uncommon insight into human behavior. I urge you to seize this opportunity, so you can better become the person you want to be.

Textbook

Gilovich, T., Keltner, D., Chen, S., & Nisbett, R. E. (2012). *Social Psychology*, 3<sup>rd</sup> ed., New York. W. W. Norton & Company.  
ISBN: 978-0393932584

Additional Readings will be Posted on Blackboard:

**Grades:**

Our grades will be based on quizzes, discussion contributions, a final paper, and participation.

6 Quizzes: 100 points each

Critical Thinking Article Reaction Responses: 150 points (25 points each)

Social Cognition Reflection Assignment: 100

Final Paper: 100

Final Exam: 100

Participation: 50 points

Total points are 1100 for the course.

All article reaction responses are due on our Blackboard course site by the beginning of class on the day indicated in our course schedule.

**By the 2<sup>nd</sup> week of class, please complete the plagiarism tutorial on the following site:**

<https://www.indiana.edu/~istd/> This will be worth 25 of your 50 participation points. The remaining participation points will be awarded based on your participation and your completion of various short written assignments that I will intermittently give you.

Print out the confirmation certificate to bring to class for the first portion (25 points) of your participation grade.

**Completion of Coursework**

Any assignment that is missed will receive a zero.

Make-up assignments will not be given. An exception may be granted to a student who provides a validated excuse to me prior to the due date. If you realize that something may keep you from attending on the day an assignment is due, contact me immediately.

Incompletes will not be given. If you are unable to complete the course assignments, it is best for you to drop the course.

Make your travel arrangements to allow you to take the final exam. You will receive a zero if you miss it. Final exam is **XXXXX**

No extra-credit assignments will be given.

Please be on time for class, and especially on quiz days. If you arrive in class after the first person has finished with their quiz, I will be unable to allow you to take the quiz. I want you to succeed, so please don't be late!

Article responses will be submitted online, using the Assignments feature in Blackboard. When you submit an article response assignment, please first open a text document and put the assignment prompts (the instructions) in it. Then, type in your response under the appropriate portions of the assignment prompts. Save this document and keep it for your records. Copy and paste the text of your response into the assignment box in Blackboard in order to submit your work. This copied and pasted text then will be graded. You should not attach any files to the assignment—just paste your work into the assignment box. I am unable to give you credit unless you paste your work into the assignment box. The article response assignment instructions may be slightly different from article to article. They are given under each article response assignment posted on Blackboard.

### **Final Paper:**

Due the last regular class period before our final exam.

Paper: In 1,400 words or less, please describe an incident relevant to social psychology that you experienced or witnessed. Indicate the number of words at the top of the paper.

After describing the incident you either witnessed or experienced, explain how four (4) of the course concepts you were exposed to (either in lecture or the book) have helped you better understand the social psychology of this incident. Make sure to clearly explain each concept before describing how it has helped your understanding of social psychology. Underline each concept. Cite your explanations of concepts using the format (Text, p. XX), or (Lecture, Date). Please do not attach a Title Page, Bibliography or Reference Page. This is unnecessary. Instead of quoting, paraphrase. For tips on paraphrasing, you can do a search on Google.com to find a site such as [[http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r\\_paraphr.html](http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/research/r_paraphr.html)]

Your grade will be heavily based on the clarity and completeness of your concept explanations, as well as how persuasively you show that the concepts have helped you better understand the incident. It also will be based on following these directions (i.e. word count, number of underlined concepts, explaining an incident).

**RESIST!...**the urge to send email, texts or tweets, check Facebook, read the news, or otherwise engage online via your computer or phone during class! Attentional capacity is a limited resource. It is a fact that dividing your attention this way will decrease your learning performance.

### **Do you want help with this course outside of class??**

First, please come to office hours. Beyond this, if you want help with this class, or any other Gen Ed course, there are several places to go. The Learning Center, located in the Academic Advising and Retention Center, DUC A-330, has tutors in most major undergraduate subjects and course levels throughout the week. They also can direct you to one of many tutoring and assistance centers across campus. To make an appointment, or request a tutor for a specific class, call 745-6254 or stop by DUC A330. Log on to TLC's website at <http://www.wku.edu/tlc> to find out more.

## **Academic Misconduct:**

All work must be your own. Cheating or plagiarism will be reported through official university channels, and the consequences will be severe.

Specific academic misconduct violations include academic dishonesty, cheating, and plagiarism. All exams in this course are to be taken (a) without the use of notes, books, or other additional materials, and (b) without the assistance of any other person or group. Use of electronic devices such as calculators, PDAs, cell phones, or audio devices during exams is not allowed.

You will receive a failing grade in the course if you engage in academic misconduct.

Do not discuss your work in this class with anyone before turning it in, and do not share your work with anyone who has not yet completed the assignment. You should not copy or steal others' work.

In general, to get something out of this course and to avoid any problems like those hinted at above, use your head. This means: pay attention in class, do the assigned readings, and study by thinking about course content as it relates to everyday life. Avoiding plagiarism is easy if you know how. Just paraphrase and cite your sources.

The quizzes, the exam, and the paper are designed for what you can do based on what we are covering in this class and the skills you have already learned. They assume you will do your own work.

**Note:** Although we will attempt to closely follow this syllabus, both the schedule and content of topics and assignments are subject to change based on the characteristics of our class. Any changes will be announced in class.

### **Disability Services**

If you have a disability and would like to request accommodation, contact the Office for Student Disability Services in Downing University Center A-200. The phone number is 745-5004; TTY is 745-3030. If you have a disability, you legally are entitled to assistance if you want it. Make sure to contact the office for student disability services before talking to me—this is university policy.

Please know that I care about your success in this course, and I am here to help in any reasonable way that I can.

Last Modified XXXXX